2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

between husband and wives, between children of different wives, and 595
between fellow wives. Polygyny, reinforced by the segregation of the sexes in everyday life and interests, renders the personal bond between husband and wife much less intimate than is the European ideal. Men are unwilling to spend much time in the company of women, and women prefer the company of their own sex. The polygynist must be most circumspect in his relations with his wives. He must treat them all with strict impartiality. Should he wish to give one a present, all must receive similar gifts. If he spends more time with one than another, this may be the cause of serious domestic discord. He must always be weighing and balancing lest preference shown to one should lead to trouble and unpleasantness. With such considerations uppermost, there is little chance of the development of companionship and communion between husband and wife, although there may be a high degree of co-operation and sympathy. It is generally only in his old age, when his wives have their own daughters-in-law and are already grandmothers, that a man allows himself the privilege of attaching himself openly to one of his wives, the one who has always treated him well. At this stage there is but little jealousy between the fellow wives, and a polygynous husband and one of his wives may sometimes in old age become a regular Darby and Joan. Where a man has one wife only and stays in his own small 543
village without male companionship at home, their relationship becomes noticeably closer. This gain in intimacy is counterbalanced by a loss of independence on the part of the wife. Since there is now no need carefully to distinguish what belongs to the wife, the husband tends to take over most of the control, and the monogamous marriage of Christians, with its greater community of property between husband and wife, has thus its disadvantages as well as its merits.

A wife is expected to obey her husband, who may beat her if she does not; yet he may not interfere in her domestic arrangements. When a woman is busy (and she alone is the judge in this matter), her husband may have to wait till well after midday before receiving his first meal. She uses her own discretion in exchanging the produce of her fields, although she will generally not sell at a store without consulting her husband. Wife-beating is not uncommon, but it takes place usually when a man is drunk or suspects his wife of unfaithfulness. For an angry woman to attack her husband is not unusual and once considerable amusement was caused at a district head's court we attended when a man complained of being beaten by his wife.

It is the duty of a husband to make or buy clothes for his wife, build and repair her huts, provide her every year with storage receptacles and an enclosure for her harvest, and nowadays also to plough for her. Most men have one field of their own which they cultivate and, though they may ask their wives to help them with weeding and reaping, the produce is their own, used for beer-making or, in bad years, distributed among their wives. If his wife or any of his children is ill, a man must be unfailing in his efforts to find medicines or doctors that will provide a cure.

The position of a wife in her husband's home changes with the changing 596

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

● 536 years. For the first few years of her married life she is strictly controlled by her mother-in-law, has a great deal of work to do, and finds little time to attend dances and beer-drinks. Nowhere was the position of a bride more forcefully brought to our notice than in the case of Anna. We met Anna first as an unmarried girl in her own home, a noisy, untidy, empty-headed girl never stirring a finger to help her brother's wife, who, though hampered by a peevish child of two, did all the housework. A year later when we met her again, this time as a bride of six months' standing, we could hardly believe the transformation that had taken place. Here was Anna, quietly doing all the work, waiting on us as guests, smearing the courtyard in the intervals between her other duties, and generally comporting herself in a manner which a year previously we should have thought impossible. Strictly speaking, there is no limit to the length of time a wife should cook for her mother-in-law. If she has married an only or the youngest son, she will continue doing so all her life; otherwise she is generally given her own hearth when the next brother marries and a new bride enters the household. If a bride does not get on well with her mother-in-law, she may, even if there is no other bride, be given her own hearth after a year or so, but in a family where all work harmoniously together, two daughters-in-law may be seen cooking in common for their husband's mother. Every woman can, however, look forward to an old age when she, too, will have her daughter-in-law to relieve her of the hard work she is unable to do.

573 595 A married woman moves about freely and goes to beer-drinks when she likes, but she would not go on a visit to her own people without consulting her husband or her mother-in-law. She may, if she is a doctor, own considerable property of her own in goats and cattle and, when her daughter gets married, she has a great deal to say in the disposal of the bride-price. Normally, the cattle coming in for a girl are used to obtain a wife for her uterine brother. If, however, there are more girls than boys, it is seldom that the mother will consent to its being used by the son of a fellow wife. In such a case it is usually given to the mother's brother, who, by using it, establishes a 'house' where the son of his niece will find a wife. Should the husband himself wish to obtain another wife with the cattle he will first have to come to an agreement with his wife, otherwise there may be a lot of trouble. Since a wife so obtained will have to cook for the wife whose daughter's cattle were used to obtain her, ill-feeling would lead to considerable disharmony and might end in breaking up the new marriage by causing the bride to run away.

595 The term for fellow wives, *vakadigani*, which the Lovedu translate as 'people who roast one another', is said to denote the state of tension and sometimes conflict that one finds between them. So bad does this become occasionally that one may find different wives of the same man living in different villages. Fellow wives may be jealous, yet they help one another in beer-making, lend each other utensils, work at each other's work-parties; and it is seldom that a woman gives her own child a tit-bit without also giving to other children that may be present. The chief wife, always the mother's brother's daughter, has no control over other wives. Where the chief wife is married only late in life, she is in